

RECESS

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. President, seeing no one else in the Chamber, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now stand in recess until 2 p.m.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:59 p.m. recessed until 2 p.m.; whereupon, the Senate reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. ROBERTS).

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a continued period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour 2:30, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 5 minutes each. Who seeks time?

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for as much time as I consume in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized, without objection.

THE FAST-TRACK TRADE DEBATE

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I am going to visit today about the fast-track trade debate that we are expected to take up here in the U.S. Senate in the next couple of weeks. It is an interesting topic. I expect it will be a hotly contested debate as it deals with international trade.

I was in North Dakota last week, and I assume the presiding officer was in Kansas and my other colleagues from here in the Senate were in their home States. I saw an interesting editorial in the largest newspaper in North Dakota, the Fargo Forum. The editorial says: Farm Economy Is at Risk. Then it describes the problems that our family farmers are facing in North Dakota including, problems of lower production because of crop disease, the lack of moisture in some parts of our State, too much moisture in other parts of our State, and very low prices that they receive for their grain. The editorial talks about an average size farm penciling out to a \$23,000 loss in net worth this year. This is for the average size farm with average production this year.

I was thinking about this because as I travel in North Dakota I see a great many family farmers. Most of them are descendants of the homesteaders in this country, the people who moved out to build a farm, and try to make a living. For some people it has been very, very hard.

In North Dakota about 200 years ago, in fact just about 7 or 8 years less than 200 years ago, we had a visit from Louis and Clark. Thomas Jefferson, then President of the United States, bought from Napoleon Bonaparte the Louisiana Purchase, as it was called, for 3 cents an acre. He bought all that land out there for 3 cents an acre. Some

jumped up in the Senate and said, why on Earth would you buy land out there? There is nothing out there. There are Indians and sagebrush. Why would you want that land?

If you were to equate what he paid for the Louisiana Purchase and compared to our current budget, he paid the equivalent of \$3 trillion. This is as a percentage of what we spend today at the Federal Government level versus what Jefferson proposed to spend on the Louisiana Purchase. He bought for 3 cents an acre on all of that land. This is equivalent of about \$3 trillion of what we would have to pay today. Then he sent Louis and Clark to go look at what he had purchased to try to find a water route to the ocean out west.

I read, as the Presiding Officer and many others may have, the wonderful book that was just published about Louis and Clark's journey. I discovered that when Thomas Jefferson gave them the charge to go explore that new territory, he gave Mr. Louis the opportunity to sign vouchers for whatever he needed for the trip. Mr. Louis went to St. Louis, MO, and he began signing vouchers. He was buying all kinds of things in St. Louis that he felt were necessary, because he didn't know what he was going to confront on that trip or how long it would take him.

He hired a bunch of folks and signed vouchers for a lot of things. They said he bought 120 gallons of whiskey for the trip. I wonder if today the Citizens Against Government Waste would let somebody get by with that. Well, probably not. Not 120 gallons of whiskey. Apparently, the theory was he needed enough whiskey to get him up into and through Montana, because at that point it was too late to turn back. I don't know whether that was said tongue-in-cheek or not.

In any event, the chronicles of the Louis and Clark expedition are quite wonderful. It is interesting to see our part of the country through their eyes 200 years ago because they stayed the winter in North Dakota. It was kind of chilly. They got hunkered down for the winter in North Dakota. They chronicled that in their book as well.

Then, about 100 years passed, and toward the turn of this century we had something called the Homestead Act, which led people to move out to States like North Dakota and claim 160 acres of land and build a house and operate a farm and raise a family, and the land would be theirs under the Homestead Act. So my State was populated by these homesteaders about 100 years ago. It is about as difficult a life as one can imagine, trying to start a farm out in the prairies of North Dakota, facing the wind, and the uncertainty of the weather. Then there was the question of, if you plant some seeds in the ground, will you get a crop? Will you have grasshoppers? Will you have crop disease? Will a hailstorm come along? And then, if you get a crop will there be a price sufficient so you can sell the crop and make a living?

Now, 100 years after the homesteaders, we discover fewer and fewer yard lights in rural North Dakota. More family farmers are going broke. Fewer family farmers can make a living. We continue to see the type of editorial I just described, "The Farm Economy Is at Risk," which describes the net loss of so many family farms in North Dakota this year.

Family farmers are the last of the free marketers in this country. They don't ask for much. They don't get much. And they risk virtually everything they have, based on the marketplace. Yet, one by one those tens of thousands of family farmers, as small producers, confront a marketplace of very large producers whose economic clout is enormous. If you are raising a beef cow when you go to the marketplace you confront the large beef packers, four of which control over 80 percent of the beef packing plants in this country. So you face an economic pressure that really is not particularly fair. The result is, generally speaking, lower prices than one would expect to exist in a free market.

When you try to market your wheat, you confront other economic enterprises. You confront the big millers, you confront the grocery manufacturers, you confront the folks who are involved in the grain trade, all of whom are large economic enterprises. Yet a family farmer competes in the marketplace against these larger economic interests which want lower prices. They want lower prices for family farmers, which means family farmers lose and they win.

The reason I describe all that is we come around now to this question about trade. The discussion in the Congress will be negotiating new trade agreements, because the President says, and a lot of both Republicans and Democrats say that the route to economic health is trade. That may be. The theory is the more you trade, the better off you are. If you read the doctrine of comparative advantage from the great economic thinkers going back to Adam Smith and Ricardo and others, the presumption was that every part of the world would do what it could do best and trade back and forth. This was the doctrine of comparative advantage. Of course, what they were talking about was trade from nation to nation, because there were no corporations at the advent of that kind of economic theory. But, notwithstanding that, the provision still exists, I suppose, in the minds of some, that the route to economic health is through trade. They believe that discussion should not be about what kind of trade. Instead, the question should be how much trade.

Some of us are concerned about our situation with trade. It is not because we believe we should not have aggressive trade practices or that we should not find ways to market our goods overseas in foreign markets that might need those goods. It is not because we